

THE ASSASSINATION OF PRESIDENT JOHN F. KENNEDY: The Involvement of the Central Intelligence Agency in the Plans and the Cover-Up

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Crucial Questions

For almost twelve years there has been much speculation about whether the Central Intelligence Agency played a role in the assassination of President John F. Kennedy in November, 1963.

With the Watergate revelations, the testimony of such well-known CIA persons as Richard Helms, E. Howard Hunt, and James McCord, and with many questions about the CIA's role in the Watergate episode still unanswered, it seems timely to once again raise the questions:

Was the CIA involved in any way in the first conspiracy, to assassinate John Kennedy? and was the agency involved in the second conspiracy to cover up the first?

Various researchers and writers have, through the years, produced and shown substantial evidence that CIA front organizations and former CIA agents were involved in the first conspiracy (to assassinate Kennedy) and that the CIA itself was deeply involved in the second conspiracy (to cover it up). /1/ /2/ /3/ /4/

Recent revelations and new evidence have appeared that make both questions worth further exploration.

E. Howard Hunt and Mexico City, 1963

The most recent revelations concern that compulsive spy, Everette Howard Hunt. Tad Szulc /5/ has informed us that Hunt was CIA acting station chief in Mexico City during August and September, 1963. Because of a hole in the known whereabouts of Hunt, as documented by Szulc, we can draw the conclusion that he was still acting station chief in October and November, 1963. To the uninitiated this may seem disconnected from the JFK assassination. However, to the researchers who have had access to the statements made by CIA agents Harry Dean and Richard Case Nagell and to FBI reports about CIA agents Ronald Augustinovich and Mary Hope, Hunt's position in Mexico City is very significant. /6/ /7/ /8/

The sum of the evidence about the planning of the assassination in Mexico City is as follows: The assassination planning team met in Mexico City on a continuing basis from September through November 1963. The meetings were held in the apartment of Guy Gabaldin, a CIA agent. Persons attending the

meetings were: Clay Shaw, David Ferrie, Guy Gabaldin, Albert Osborne, Harry Dean, Richard Case Nagell, William Seymour, Ronald Augustinovich, Mary Hope, Lee Harvey Oswald, and Emilio Santana.

IS THIS ALL? HO HO!

Dallas, 1963

The team moved from Mexico City to Dallas in November and set up shop at two different houses, one a rooming house run by Tammie True. They carried off the assassination on November 22, 1963 with Seymour, Santana, and two other hired gunmen firing shots. Several other participants were recruited in Dallas including Jack Lawrence, Fred Lee Crisman, "Frenchy", Jim Braden, Jim Hicks, Breck Wall, Jack Ruby, and Larry Craford. Several members of the Dallas police were also recruited to assist with preparations and to help frame Oswald.

Since every one of the people attending the planning meetings in Mexico City were CIA agents or CIA front organization employees, it seems likely to assume that Hunt either organized the meetings or at least knew they were taking place and sanctioned them. Gabaldin lived and worked in Mexico City as a full-time CIA agent. He must have reported to Hunt as acting station chief. /2/ /6/ /7/ /8/

Organization of Assassination Teams by Hunt

According to both Hunt, in his own Watergate testimony and in his book, and Szulc in his book, Hunt organized several assassination teams under CIA auspices in Mexico City. He was planning the assassination of Castro in 1965 and the assassination of the President of Panama in 1971. /5/ /9/

Knowledge by Richard Helms

If Hunt knew about the assassination plans for JFK in Mexico City, could Richard Helms have not known about them?

On November 22, 1963, E. Howard Hunt was in a meeting with Richard Helms, Lyman Kirkpatrick, and Harry Williams in Washington, D.C. They were discussing whether the CIA would put up more money for further support of anti-Castro Cubans in Florida. Hunt and Williams were still acting as go-betweens for the CIA and the Cubans. This is a very significant meeting in view of the fact that JFK had ordered all CIA support of anti-Castro groups to be stopped in the spring and summer of 1963. He had

the FBI and the Coast Guard close the training camps in Florida and Louisiana and even arrest some of the anti-Castro invaders. He was working on a detente with Castro, having sent secret emissaries to Cuba. /10/

Is it possible that Helms and Hunt knew that Kennedy would almost certainly be assassinated on November 22, 1963 and decided to go ahead with plans for a Cuban invasion, secure in the knowledge that JFK would not be around to stop it again?

Clay Shaw's Vast Support against Garrison's Prosecution

Despite the end result of the trial of Clay Shaw, substantial evidence exists that he, David Ferrie, and other individuals were involved in the planning of the assassination in New Orleans and in Mexico City. During the Shaw trial and during the two years that Shaw and his lawyers managed to delay the trial, Jim Garrison, Jim Alcock, and others on Garrison's staff wondered at how vast Shaw's support seemed to be. Even the New Orleans newspapers found it strange that Shaw could afford all of the legal and detective resources he seemed to have. On more than one occasion the papers reported that Shaw's lawyers were being paid by the CIA. /2/

Garrison's witnesses were discovered and followed around and eventually intimidated by various people. Shaw seemed to know who the prosecution witnesses were going to be, well in advance of the public knowledge. Garrison's staff was riddled with informers and agents of various types. When he would claim that the CIA was somehow involved in the case because they had been involved in the assassination, the press would pooh pooh the idea and get on Garrison's back. That was the way matters stood after the trial was over and after "Heritage of Stone" was published. Garrison was harassed by the government and the press. He was framed in a conspiracy by the Justice Dept. and the Internal Revenue Service for alleged bribe taking and for cheating on his income tax. /1/ /2/ /11/

Garrison was found innocent on both counts by juries of his peers in August 1973 and March 1974. The press still climbed all over him portraying the trial results as Garrison talking his way out of both charges by influencing the juries.

Marchetti's Evidence about Richard Helms

In December 1973, a piece of information came to light that not only proves the press was wrong about Garrison and Shaw, but implicates Richard Helms and the CIA in the whole situation to the point that a full re-examination of the CIA's role in the assassination is necessary. The information comes from a CIA employee, Victor Marchetti, who is co-author of a book about the CIA that has caused a stir of controversy in the courts. Marchetti's book has been published by Harper and Row over the strenuous objections of the CIA. A court has ruled that the book can be published with only a portion of the deletions demanded originally by the CIA.

Marchetti stated in December that he had attended several high-level CIA meetings in 1968 with Richard Helms and Marchetti's boss, assistant director Admiral Rufus Taylor present. He said they were very much concerned about Garrison's investigation and the arrest of Clay Shaw in early 1967. Helms stated that Shaw had been for many years a CIA informant and was still helping the CIA at the time JFK was

killed. Helms stated that David Ferrie was a CIA agent and that he was still an agent at the time of the assassination.

Helms and Taylor agreed that the fact that both Shaw and Ferrie were working for the CIA had to be kept secret at all costs. They stated in the meetings that Shaw would receive all the help the CIA could give him in his defense against the charge of conspiracy to assassinate the president. Marchetti said he made other inquiries around the agency and determined that Shaw was an informer in his capacity as manager of the New Orleans International Trade Mart. Marchetti said he was not sure what form "all the help the CIA could give Shaw" took, but he always assumed they were paying Shaw's lawyers. /12/

This report may be interpreted by some persons as the CIA's taking the position that one of their own men was accused of a share in killing the President of the United States, and since he was innocent, that he had to be protected. However, if an objective view is taken of Shaw's true CIA position and his provable actions in concert with David Ferrie, Lee Harvey Oswald, William Seymour, and Jack Ruby and others, the big question must be raised.

Clay Shaw, Major L. M. Bloomfield, and Centro Moderno Commerciale (CMC)

Clay Shaw was a member of the board of directors of a very important CIA organization called Centro Moderno Commerciale (CMC), headquartered in Rome at the time. CMC was engaged in various clandestine and secret operations and spying for the CIA in the early 1960's. It utilized International Trade Marts around the world, like the one Shaw managed in New Orleans and also the one where John Kennedy was scheduled to speak on November 22, 1963, for these activities. Another member of the CMC board was Major L. M. Bloomfield of Montreal. Shaw and Ferrie flew on the same plane to visit Bloomfield in Montreal at a time during the summer of 1963, when backing for the assassination was being sought. Certainly Helms and Taylor were well aware of Bloomfield and Shaw's role in CMC, and could easily have known about the meetings taking place in Montreal and in Ferrie's apartment in New Orleans. It was at one of these meetings, attended by Shaw and Ferrie, that Perry Russo, Sandra Moffett McMains, and Nils (Lefty) Peterson saw both of them with William Seymour (the Oswald double) and several Cubans. (two of whom were Manuel Garcia Gonzalez and Emilio Santana) /2/ /13/

The CIA probably aided these people as well as Gordon Novel, a CIA operative, whose girl friend, Sandra Moffett, told him about the meeting. Novel, who had been operating for CIA front organizations with Guy Bannister and David Ferrie in New Orleans, knew who killed Ferrie in order to keep him from telling Garrison about the assassination team.

An Extradition Prevented by Governor Rhodes of Ohio

Novel went to McLean, Va., home of the CIA, and then to Ohio, to avoid testifying before the New Orleans grand jury. Governor Rhodes of Ohio protected Novel from extradition to Louisiana, causing a big argument with Governor McKeithen who backed up Garrison. Novel made a public statement that he would come to New Orleans voluntarily from Ohio and tell the grand jury who killed David Ferrie, provided he was given immunity from prosecution. Garrison refused this offer, so Novel remained in Ohio. He is still there. /2/ /14/

A VALID LINE OF INQUIRY TO ASK:
WHAT HELP DID CIA GIVE SHAW AND WHY RISK EXPOSURE IF

Another Extradition Prevented by Governor Connally of Texas

Another CIA front employee who was accused of participating in the JFK assassination planning was Sergio Arcacha Smith. The CIA probably protected him from prosecution in New Orleans. He fled to Texas where his extradition was prevented by Governor Connally. /2/ /14/

Sandra Moffett McMains was in Nebraska when Garrison issued a warrant for her arrest. He wanted to find out what she knew about the meeting in Ferrie's apartment. By the simple, but little known, expedient of crossing the border into Iowa, Mrs. McMains avoided the subpoena. Iowa is one of the few states with no extradition agreements with other states. Garrison calculated that someone, like the CIA, gave her advice on what to do. /2/ /14/

Novel wrote a letter before he left New Orleans addressed to a Mr. Weiss in the Defense Intelligence Agency suggesting that Garrison's investigation had to be stopped. He requested that the powers of the intelligence community be brought to bear on stopping the investigation. The letter was discovered by two women who rented Novel's old apartment hidden under linoleum in the kitchen. Novel laughed it off by saying it was a trick he had played on Garrison. /2/ /14/

Oswald's Connections with the CIA and the FBI

A large amount of evidence has been accumulated that shows Oswald was a CIA operative from 1959 until he died. The evidence points to the fact that he had been working for the CIA in New Orleans in 1963 on clandestine activities connected with Guy Bannister's CIA-funded operations for a second invasion of Cuba. Arcacha Smith, Gordon Novel, David Ferrie, Jack Ruby, Mike McLaney, Oswald, and several others were all involved in these operations. When President John F. Kennedy put a stop to the plans in the summer of 1963, and several of these people began the discussions about assassinating him, Oswald became part of the group. In the summer months he turned informer on the group, reporting what he knew about their assassination plans to the FBI. Substantial evidence exists that Oswald was a paid FBI informant in mid-summer in New Orleans and in the fall in Dallas, and that he was submitting regular reports on the activities of the assassination group to two FBI agent contacts in New Orleans and one in Dallas. /1/ /2/ /15/

The fact that Oswald worked for both the CIA and the FBI, has, until recent months, seemed to provide the prime motive for the two agencies to cover the truth. It has also seemed to make sense that the Warren Commission, dominated by individuals with ties to the CIA and Armed Forces individuals, (Allen Dulles, Gerald Ford, John J. McCloy, and Richard Russell) would be forced to go along with the cover-up to keep Oswald's connections with the agencies a secret.

The Commission was faced with a dilemma when Waggoner Carr, Texas Attorney General, told them in January 1964 that Oswald was a paid FBI informant and even gave them his payroll number. /16/ Several top secret Commission sessions (these sessions are still classified) were held right after this news arrived, during which the Commission could have arrived at their cover-up decision. /17/

The Necessity for Richard Helms to Cover Up

Now there are Marchetti's revelations and Hunt's testimony and Szulc's discovery, so a much better reason for the CIA to cover up the crime surfaces. Richard Helms had to know who did what. With so many of his agents and employees directly involved in the assassination, he had little choice but to go to extreme lengths to cover up. This reasoning assumes that Helms did not take an active role in the assassination itself. He was Deputy Director of Plans (the clandestine part of the CIA) at the time. Even if Helms had participated or had known prior to the assassination that it was going to take place, this still does not imply that the entire CIA backed the assassination. However, the question of what did Helms know and when did he know it must definitely be asked. A corollary question is what did John McCone, head of the CIA at the time, know and when did he know it. Another question is what did Allen Dulles know and when did he know it. This question extends then to Lyndon Johnson, John Connally, Gerald Ford, John McCloy, Earl Warren, Richard Russell, Hale Boggs, and John Sherman Cooper.

A Congressional Investigation of the CIA

If a Congressional investigation is ever conducted of the CIA and its clandestine activities, the question of involvement in the presidential assassination should head the list of topics. It seems vastly more important that any other questions about the CIA, even including the Viet Nam war. If "The Secret Team" can assassinate a President, cover it up, and get away with it forever, we might have to abandon hope of ever straightening out our country.

Discussions are under way in both the Senate and House Armed Services Committees about investigating the CIA. It is doubtful that these committees have up to this time seen any of the evidence referred to in this article; nor do they have in mind an investigation of the John Kennedy assassination and the role of the CIA. But they should.

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